

MENDES VETERINARY SERVICES

Dr Luca Mendes

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SAVC Facility No: IC21/16287

14 January 2023

RE: Aardvark Post Mortem Examination for the SPCA

Post Mortem Report

Client: SPCA
Contact: John Friedman
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Species: Aardvark (*Orycteropus afer*)
Gender: Female
Age: Adult
Body Condition: $\frac{3}{5}$
Weight: +-50kg

History:

On 14 January 2023, a freshly dead Aardvark was discovered at Sunset Beach, near Milnerton, Western Cape. No information or reason behind the dead Aardvark's appearance was available. The animal was brought to Bergzicht Animal Hospital for a post mortem examination. The findings were as follows:

EXTERNAL:

Female Aardvark in good body condition with a small amount of live ticks visible (*Rhipicephalus* spp.). Bloody discharge was observed from the right nostril. No visible injuries or physical abnormalities were discovered.

INTERNAL:

Following the skinning of the animal, no haemorrhages or internal trauma were seen throughout the subcutaneous tissue. There were also no fractured bones.

Severe generalised congestion and oedema of the left and right lung lobes were noted, with the oedema extending throughout the trachea into the laryngeal region. This oedema continued through the right nasal passage and out the same nostril. All lung tissue was spongy in texture and floated when placed in water.

Multiple epicardial petechial haemorrhages were observed along the coronary sinus and the left ventricle wall. No haemorrhages were noted within the myocardial tissue.

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The rest of the blood rich organs all appeared normal, but with mild autolysis setting in.

Gastrointestinal Tract (GIT) examination revealed an empty stomach and full gallbladder with no contents throughout the small intestine. Faeces was present throughout the descending colon and rectum.

An inactive uterus and ovaries were discovered and the bladder was empty.

Summary:

Based on the macroscopic findings, the animal exhibited signs of acute shock lung or Acute Respiratory Distress Syndrome (ARDS) which resulted in severe hypoxia and heart failure resulting in death.

The inciting cause of this pathology is unknown and could have been caused by many different things including, but not limited to: head trauma (which can damage the respiratory regulation centre), direct lung trauma/contusions, aspiration pneumonia (e.g. drowning), viral or bacterial pneumonia, envenomation from a neurotoxin or other causes of anaphylaxis, inhalation of toxic substances, severe sepsis, neurogenic or cardiogenic shock etc.

To fully diagnose the cause of death in this animal, additional tests and further history around the circumstances surrounding its appearance on the beach would need to be investigated.

For questions or concerns, please contact me directly.

Yours sincerely,



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